

## Message Text

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63

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 /069 W

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R 172119Z MAR 76

FM AMCONSUL TORONTO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3378

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

UNCLAS TORONTO 0304

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE ONTARIO PROVINCIAL ELECTION

1. THE NEW LIBERAL PARTY LEADER, STUART SMITH, UNEXPECTEDLY USED VERY FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO CALL FOR VOTE OF NON-CONFIDENCE IN MINORITY PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE PARTY (TORY) GOVERNMENT OF WILLIAM

DAVIS WHICH VOTE WILL TAKE PLACE APRIL 5. THIS IS ONLY ONE DAY BEFORE THE DAVIS GOVERNMENT HAD PLANNED TO ANNOUNCE ANNUAL BUDGET. FOLLOWING GOVERNMENT'S THRONE SPEECH, NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY (NDP) LEADER, STEPHEN LEWIS, WHO IS THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION LEADER AS HIS PARTY NOW HAS 38 SEATS IN THE LEGISLATURE, PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE SPEECH OF A NATURE REQUIRING A NON-CONFIDENCE VOTE. SMITH, WHOSE LIBERAL PARTY HAS HAD ONLY 36 VOTES IN THE LEGISLATURE SINCE THE ELECTION SIX MONTHS AGO, SURPRISED EVEN THE USUALLY KNOWLEDGEABLE PRESS CORPS AT THE LEGISLATURE BY OFFERING VERY SIMILAR AMENDMENTS.

2. THIS, UNLESS EITHER THE NDP OR THE LIBERALS SHOULD MAKE AN EMBARRASSING ABOUT FACE OR THERE IS A SPLIT IN THE VOTE AMONG THEIR MEMBERS THE MINORITY DAVIS GOVERNMENT (51 LEGISLATORS) WILL BE VOTED OUT OF OFFICE ON THE NIGHT OF APRIL 5. THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE FOR THE ELECTION WOULD BE MAY 20 ALTHOUGH IT COULD BE MAY 27 OR EVEN A THURSDAY IN JUNE.

3. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH PREMIER DAVIS MIGHT NOT HAVE FAVORED  
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SUCH AN EARLY ELECTION BOTH HE AND HIS PARTY HAVE MADE IT

CLEAR THAT THEY WOULD PREFER TO GO TO THE ELECTORATE AFTER  
HAVING BEEN THROWN OUT OF OFFICE. ALREADY THIS MORNING THE  
PREMIER INDICATED THAT ONE OF TWO MAJOR ISSUES IN THE CAMPAIGN  
WOULD BE THE IRRESPONSIBLE MANNER IN WHICH THE GOVERNMENT WAS  
THROWN OUT OF OFFICE BY THE OPPOSITION PARTIES. THE  
OTHER MAJOR ISSUE WOULD BE DEFENSE OF THE TORY GOVERNMENT'S  
POLICY OF FISCAL RESTRAINT, THE PRECIPITATING FACTOR FOR  
THE AMENDMENTS. NDP LEADER STEPHEN LEWIS AND LIBERAL LEADER  
STUART SMITH ARE ALREADY EACH ACCUSING THE OTHER OF BEING  
RESPONSIBLE FOR CALLING THE ELECTION. AS THE NDP RECEIVED  
MORE SEATS WITH FEWER VOTES THAN THE LIBERALS IN THE  
SEPTEMBER ELECTION IT APPEARS THAT SMITH HAS REASON TO HOPE  
THAT HE WILL BE AT LEAST BE ABLE TO MOVE HIS PARTY BACK TO THE  
NUMBER TWO POSITION.  
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